

Welcome to the World of ACTION

What is the ACTION Parent/Teen Support Program?

The ACTION Parent/Teen Support Program is a free weekly meeting for parents and teens. The meeting is a safe place where families can work on identifying and addressing high risk teen behavior and receive support from other families who have been there. We work on behavior and consequences and provide parents with practical tools to manage high risk teen behavior. Most importantly, we offer hope and understanding to parents.

What happens at the meeting?

Parents and teens meet separately. The parent group is led by parents who have been through the program and are trained as ACTION parent facilitators. We believe that by learning new methods of parenting, our families can improve. We offer hope and practical solutions to the problems parents are facing with their teens. The teens meet with trained and certified ACTION counselors who work with the families to aid in determining short and long-term goals to resolve behavioral problems and family conflicts. Teens become part of a positive peer group who hold them accountable for their behavior and for the commitments made to the group. Teens are able to communicate openly and learn skills which promote healthier and happier lifestyles as they become accountable to their peer group. Anything shared in either group is completely confidential.

What is the success rate?

Year after year we see the same results. The kids who do well are the kids whose parents come and stay. Too many parents come a few times and think their teen is not as bad as “those kids” or come for a short while and think their teen is “fixed.” We cannot cure all of your problems in a few meetings – ACTION takes a commitment of regular attendance. But, the families who keep coming back have a nearly 100% success rate. In fact, we have seen more success from the ACTION Parent/Teen Support Program than from all of ACTION’s residential and outpatient programs combined.

What is the cost?

All meetings are free. We do accept nominal voluntary donations that are used for special events for the group and to help pay for counselors and drug testing for those who can’t afford it.

My teen is ditching school and is defiant, but I don’t think he is using drugs.

The ACTION Parent/Teen Support Program is designed to address all kinds of high risk behavior, not just drug and alcohol use. Truancy or trouble at school is usually the first sign of trouble with teens. By bringing your teen to ACTION at this stage, you can learn how to address this type of risky behavior and help prevent a downward spiral. We regularly work with teens facing issues such as drug and alcohol abuse, defiance and rebellion, truancy and other school related issues, anger issues, criminal activity, and gang involvement.

Can you drug test my teen?

Yes. We can administer an instant test at the meeting, or we can send a urine sample to our lab to determine levels of drugs in the body. This is helpful if your teen is smoking marijuana, which can stay in the system up to 30 days. As you are able to see the levels decreasing each week, you can be sure that your teen has stopped smoking.

My teen is so angry and out of control that I don't think there is much hope.

Our counselors have seen it all and are equipped to handle your teen's defiance. Virtually none of the kids came willingly to their first meeting. It's okay if they don't participate – just work on getting them here the first night. We'll take it from there.

My teen says he doesn't have a problem and doesn't need to go to ACTION.

All of the kids say that at first. They will tell you all kinds of things to manipulate you into not making them attend. My favorite is when they tell us that we parents are being brainwashed. It's true that not all of our kids are addicts, but they are at-risk kids as evidenced by the behavior that brought you to ACTION.

Don't all kids smoke a little pot or experiment? Isn't it part of growing up?

No. We cannot afford to chalk up drug use to "part of growing up." Kids today are in much more danger from experimental drug use than we ever were as kids. The types of drugs these kids are experimenting with can be deadly. Prescription drugs are the new drug of choice and can be deadly even in small doses with the wrong combination. Often, the kids don't even know what they are taking. The statistics are frightening - approximately one in five teenagers has abused a prescription painkiller to get high and close to half of all teens believe that prescription drugs are "much safer" than street drugs. Close to one third believe that prescription drugs are not addictive. In fact, there were more new prescription drug users last year than there were new pot smokers. But even pot today is much stronger than the pot from our day. Bottom line, we parents cannot tolerate any type of drug use. The risk is too high.

I don't want people to know that my teen is out of control and/or using drugs.

Again, everything said at the meetings is kept confidential. There is no shame in needing help and support. The first step is the hardest. It is hard to face that our teens have these kinds of issues, but you can't change that which you don't acknowledge. The most common response from parents after their first meeting is relief. For maybe the first time, they feel like there is hope. And there really is. When parents get stronger, teens get better. We hope you will take the first step and come see what we are about.

Where and when does the ACTION meeting take place?

Thursday

We meet every ~~Monday~~ night from 7:00 – 9:00 at Newbury Park High School in Room C-30. You do not need to provide advance notice, just show up.